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ABSTRACT

The National Education Association's Mastery-in-Learning Project (MILP) seeks to empower students and teachers to become agents of democratic reform within the schools. It provides teachers and students with the necessary time, resources, skills, and motivation to restructure their schools into self-renewing centers of inquiry. Twenty-seven MILP schools are participating in the Project. As a first step in implementing the Project, two initiating procedures were followed: the School Profile and the Faculty Inventory. The School Profile describes the school on the day the Project started, focusing on teachers and teaching, students and learning, curriculum, and school/faculty. The Faculty Inventory was conducted to help the faculty identify goals, establish priorities, and develop a greater sense of collegiality. Support for the Project is provided by a site-based consultant and regional research laboratories and centers. The Teaching Resources and Knowledge Base (TRaK) provides faculty with resources needed to achieve reform objectives. Selected insights into the program's progress are presented from the viewpoints of the Project central staff and one MILP school. Appendixes provide more detailed information on Project concepts. (JD)

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AN ECOLOGICAL AND SCHOOL SPECIFIC MODEL OF STUDENT AND TEACHER EMPOWERMENT: THE N.E.A.'S MASTERY-IN-LEARNING PROJECT

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Most educational reformers now agree that teacher and student empowerment are the keys to improving education (e.g., see Ashton & Webb, 1986; Goodlad, 1983). To be effective, educational reform must be initiated and implemented from within. Traditionally in the United States, educational reforms have been planned and implemented by those outside the schools. This model of reform has been ineffective; it fails to account for the complex culture of schools; it excludes the school practitioners who ultimately determine if the reform will be successful (Goodlad, 1975). As Berliner (1986) has pointed out,

> the best way to change the norms of the workplace is to provide teachers with the opportunity to do it themselves. Self-efficacy begins by making people feel that they have the power to change their own world. The kind of leadership needed in the teaching profession today is leadership that hands over power to teachers to solve their own problems. (p. xiii)

The N.E.A.'s Mastery-In-Learning Project

The N.E.A's Mastery-In-Learning Project (MILP) attempts to renew schools from within. The Project seeks to empower students and teachers to become agents of democratic reform within their schools. Specifically, the Project's purpose is to provide teachers and students with the necessary time, resources, skills, and motivation to restructure their schools into self-renewing centers of inquiry (Goodlad, 1975; Schaefer, 1967). Schaefer (1967) has characterized a center of inquiry as,

> an institution characterized by a pervasive search for meaning and rationality in its work. Fundamentally, such a school requires that teachers be freed to inquire into the nature of what and how they are teaching...Finally, no school can be reflective about its work or serious in its commitment to learning if students are not similarly encouraged to seek rational purpose in their own studies (pp. 3-4).

In 1985-86 six MILP schools participated in the initial pilot program; in the 1986-87 school year twenty-one schools were added. Over 800 schools nationwide applied to participate in the Project. To be considered for acceptance, schools had to demonstrate support from their local and state teachers associations, their local parent

and community support organizations, their local school board, their school based administration, and at least 75% of the faculty had to vote affirmatively through a secret ballot. The twenty-seven schools selected for the network reflect a rich diversity of schools that are demographically representative of the student bodies of the nation.

The Methodology

The first step in implementing a school based, school improvement program is to define the problem. In the Mastery In Learning Project, the problem is defined through two initiating procedures: The School Profile and The Faculty Inventory.

The purpose of The School Profile is to describe the school on the day the Project begins. The School Profile is organized around four topics: "Teachers and Teaching," "Students and Learning," "Curriculum" and "School/Faculty" (see Appendix A). To gather information for the Profile, structured interviews are conducted with representatives from five groups: students, teachers, parents, site-based administrators, and central office staff.

The Faculty Inventory, designed to help the faculty identify goals, establish priorities and develop a greater sense of collegiality (see Appendix B), requires participation by the entire faculty. Data for the Inventory are collected in two sessions. During the first session,

groups of faculty discuss/and achieve consensus for questions such as what is so wonderful about this school that you would never want it to change?; what is so bad that we should change it tomorrow?; and what problems need resolution but have no easy solutions and will require time for study? In the second inventory session, each faculty member completes a discrepancy model questionnaire measuring his/her attitudes toward the four areas outlined in The School Profile, as well as his/her perceived ability to affect school change (i.e., teacher empowerment).

After the data have been collected and compiled, they are shared with the faculty. After further review the faculty develops an action plan for maintaining selected strengths and improving particular weaknesses. The action plan includes a prioritized set of general and specific objectives, a projected time table for achieving objectives, a list of short-term and long-term activities to accomplish the objectives, and the assignment of individuals to activities. A leadership committee is selected to coordinate Project activities and to organize sub-committees for work on identified objectives.

The Site-Based Consultant

Each MILP school engages a site-based consultant who serves as an objective Project facilitator (e.g., see Goodlad, 1975). The site-based consultant is someone who

has been a successful teacher, usually a graduate student in education at a local college or university.

Responsibilities for the site consultant include collecting, analyzing and presenting the data from the School Profile and Faculty Inventory, helping the steering committee and sub-committees keep focused and on task, establishing and maintaining a Project resource center, reviewing relevant research material when necessary, assisting in the development and implementation of professional development and implementation of professional development activities, coordinating Project documentation and evaluation (See Appendix C), developing and maintaining an effective communication network, and monitoring the schools' Project budget.

Regional Research Laboratories

Each Project school works with one of the Department of Education's regional research laboratories and centers. Representatives from these organizations provide current, relevant research in an easily accessible format to help faculties achieve their designated improvement initiatives.

The Teaching Resources and Knowledge Network (TRaK)

TRaK, the Project's information network is designed to provide faculty with resources needed to achieve reform objectives. (See Appendix D) TRaK currently contains information on subjects such as school leadership, interdisciplinary teaching, teaching critical thinking skills, motivating students, school climate, teacher and student expectations and teacher morale and collegiality.

How Has the Project Progressed Thus Far?

Most advocates of school reform believe that it takes several years to restructure schools into self-renewing centers of inquiry (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Goodlad, 1975). Given that the Project is less than two years old, a qualitative evaluation of the program would be premature at this time. However the Project central staff in Washington, D. C. and the faculties in the local schools have begun to observe and record trends.

Selected Insights from Project Central Staff

1. *To develop and implement school-based, school-improvement programs, teachers need time to reflect, to plan, and to act.* To engage in research and change activities, teachers in the Project receive time by drawing from the 100-day

substitute bank (a special feature of the program), by volunteering their time after school and by creating "shared time" with their colleagues. However, these sources are not sufficient. At several sites, faculties are examining ways to restructure their school so that more time for collegiality can be scheduled into the school day.

2. *Site-based consultants are essential to the success of school-based, school reform efforts.*

Most teachers are isolated in their schools (Ashton & Webb, 1986); therefore, most faculty have difficulty assessing their school objectively and seeing the "big picture." Site-based consultants provide the objectivity and expertise necessary to develop and implement school-wide improvement programs. For example, the faculty at the Greasewood/Toyei Consolidated School were dissatisfied with existing curriculum, but lacked the expertise to effect change. They asked for help from site-based consultant. Using the resource from a nearby university, the consultant compiled several different conceptions of curriculum and shared them with the faculty. As a result, the faculty at the Greasewood/Toyei school

is currently reorganizing their school's curriculum; a reorganization not possible without assistance from the site facilitators.

3. *Principals are learning that leadership involves collegial decision making.*

Principal's seeing their faculties become empowered and energized through collegial decision making, are learning to take John Goodlad's advice: It is not the principal's job to make decisions, but to make sure they get made.

4. *As faculty become empowered, they are more willing to take risks.*

At Hillsdale Jr. High School in Simi Valley, California, the faculty developed a school calendar based on their knowledge of the social and intellectual development of adolescents. Under the new plan, students and teachers adopted a "five/one" schedule (i.e., five weeks in school and one week for activities such as tutoring, enrichment, recreation, independent study and family vacations). The faculty's plan was comprehensive, including an information campaign, a proposed budget and justification from the educational literature. A year ago such an endeavor would not have been possible for this faculty. A series of activities made such a concerted effort possible: The Project's School Profile and Faculty Inventory helped the faculty coalesce around this problem, leadership

development workshops enabled the steering committee to do long range planning and to rest their skills at persuading others, and support from the Project's site-based consultant helped sustain the project.

5. *Educational reform is becoming empirically based*. At Westwood School in Dalton, Georgia, the faculty has engaged in a year-long study of child growth and development to revise its testing/assessment procedures and to create an improved student grouping plan.

6. *The school climate at Project schools now includes the concept of collegiality or "facultyness."*

An all-staff holiday party may not seem like a big step forward to many people, but at Atlantic City High School it is viewed as a landmark event. This large, mature faculty had slipped into a culture characterized by isolation, cynicism, hostility, and the appearance of non-caring. Because of the MILP Project, small moves are now being made to get staff members talking with one another about teaching, students, the school's curriculum, and the school climate.

7. *An empowered faculty leads to an empowered student body.* Thus far no quantitative data is available conforming that teachers who feel more independence, more rooted in professional knowledge, and more inquiring into their own practice, are better able to help students acquire similar qualities. However, parents in the pilot schools are reporting that the school's climate is improving the way their children are learning. It is anticipated that future evidence will support that faculty empowerment fosters student empowerment.

8. *For very good reasons some faculty do not want to participate.* Some faculty are resistant to change. For example, they have been burned once too often, or they are conservative in the true sense of the word (i.e., responsibility for a precious commodity, their students' futures, make it imperative that whatever change is implemented must have high probability for success). Still, there are faculty who will refuse to change no matter what. In Project schools this problem is addressed by providing workshops and other experiences to encourage open discussions about change by creating improvement projects that, at least for the moment, do not require full faculty participation, and by ignoring the problem every concerted effort is made in each

school to keep all faculty apprised of Project activities, assuming that success will breed interest from an increasing number of faculty.

9. *Most of the Project schools are experiencing the following states of change:*

- Disbelief that there is real trust to take on the job of reform at the school level
- Exhilaration that there is such trust
- Dispirited--"what, you won't tell us what to do!"
- Commitment to solving a few problems and satisfaction when the problems actually do get solved
- Enthusiasm for sharing with others the changes that are happening to them personally and professionally
- Experimenting with isolated sub-projects
- Coordinating the sub-projects to get a greater effect...and, someday soon...
- Implementing a comprehensive school improvement that begins the process of restructuring teaching, learning, curriculum and the general school environment

Selected Insights From One Project School: St. Petersburg High School

1. *Teachers need structured time during the day to work on school improvement programs.*

   At St. Petersburg High School, structured time is not available for teachers to meet during the school day. Committee meetings must be held after school, or substitutes must be provided for teachers to meet during the day; neither option is educationally sound. At SPHS several possible solutions to this problem have been discussed including hiring paraprofessionals to free teachers and administrators from non-instructional duties, giving teachers more inservice days during the school year, putting administrators back into the classroom on a part-time basis, and making teachers twelve-month employees.

2. *If school reform is to be successful, teachers must become effective political organizers.*

   SPHS is a political institution; affecting change at SPHS is a political process. Teachers are learning how the political hierarchy in the district and state educational system operate and how to manipulate that hierarchy. Teachers must acquire basic political organizing skills in their preservice and inservice teacher education programs.

3. *School reform is a slow, gradual process.* A significant understanding that emerged quickly from MILP work was that it was a mistake to involve the entire faculty immediately in school improvement efforts. It is important to move slowly, to start with a small group of enthusiastic teachers and then build outward. Realizing small victories quickly is also important to help teachers overcome their cynicism.

4. *Personnel in higher education should assume the role of Peace Corps volunteers.*

Every school is a unique culture; therefore, it is difficult to affect change in a school without processing an insider's understanding of that culture. At SPHS experiences with outside experts have been unproductive because the outsiders were insensitive to the school's subtle culture nuances. If personnel in higher education wish to play a significant role in helping reform at SPHS, they should assume a role similar to that of Peace Corps volunteers; they must enter the culture and learn to see the school from the perspective of the inhabitants; they must learn the specific cultural goals; they must internalize those goals; and they must work collaboratively with staff members to achieve those goals.

5. *District and state level "middle managers" are uncomfortable with of school-based reform.*

The Principal, Superintendent, and State Commissioner of Education are all enthusiastic about the concept of school-based reform. The district and state middle managers are fighting those efforts, however; obviously, they are the ones most threatened by the transfer of decision-making power to the local schools. One solution discussed is the concept of two-tier bargaining. This would involve the teachers' union and the school board's bargaining a general contract at the district level and allowing the "professional staff" in the buildings to bargain the specifics. Whether the middle managers, who represent the school board and the teachers' union in contract negotiations, will agree to this concept has yet to be determined.

6. *Inservice teacher education programs need to be part of the school based, school-improvement programs.*

In Pinellas County, teachers are required to attend district-wide staff development workshops designed by district level administrators. These workshops are unpopular with faculties because they rarely meet the teachers' needs. SPHS has initiated an in-house teacher education program titled Teachers Teaching Teachers (TTT). Because the TTT program

was designed and implemented by the SPHS faculty, the program is more effective in addressing the faculty's needs. The program also fosters collegiality through its coaching component. Predictably, the district level administrators are resisting attempts to replace district wide workshops with TTT workshops.

7. *The Mastery-In-Learning Project is providing SPHS teachers with additional professional opportunities.*

The Project at SPHS is a career ladder program. SPHS faculty involved in the Project have assumed additional professional responsibilities including working as consultants, publishing articles, presenting papers at professional conferences, teaching teachers how to teach, managing a budget, and supervising a staff.

8. *Automation will facilitate the process of teacher empowerment.*

The staff contends that at SPHS automation will facilitate the process of teacher empowerment. Currently a sub-committee is examining how computers can be used to improve teachers' ability to communicate, access needed information in a timely manner, provide more time for professional decision making, and reduce paperwork.

9. *The "industrial/hierarchical" management philosophy in education must be replaced with a more democratic management model.*

Fifteen full time administrators and 110 full time

teachers are staffed at SPHS. A joint faculty/administration committee is currently brainstorming strategies to "de-industrialize" the administration of the school.

10. *Can a single pilot school in a large school district become a self-renewing center of in*quiry?

As mentioned earlier, middle management is resisting the school-improvement project at SPHS. If every school in the district were implementing the Project, would the resistance of middle management be easier to overcome? Some school districts are implementing the school-based reform philosophy on a district-wide basis. The success rate of those programs versus the N.E.A.'s Project schools should provide interesting data.

The material in the following appendices provides additional information about several concepts referred to in this paper. To receive an Information Packet about the Project, write to NEA Mastery In Learning Project, 1201 16th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20036

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NEA MASTERY IN LEARNING PROJECT

SCHOOL PROFILE

Questions To Be Answered	Representative Group Of Students	Representative Group Of Teachers	Principal and Other Site Administrators	Representative Group Of Parents	Central Office Staff	All Faculty: Selected Data Faculty Inventory Questionnaire
TEACHERS AND TEACHING						
1. How influential is the knowledge base in guiding decisions about teaching and learning in this school?		Complete form: RELIANCE ON THE KNOWLEDGE BASE	Complete form: RELIANCE ON THE KNOWLEDGE BASE			Question 2-a, b, d, g Question 10-e
2. What are the strengths of the staff?		Complete form: STRENGTHS OF STAFF	Complete form: STRENGTHS OF STAFF		Complete form: STRENGTHS OF STAFF	Question 8-a, b, c, d, f, g, h Question 10-f Question 15-b, c
3. Do teachers use a variety of teaching styles/strategies?		Verbal question: *Do teachers in this school use a variety of teaching styles?* Complete form: TEACHING METHODS	Verbal question: *Do teachers in this school use a variety of teaching styles?* Complete form: TEACHING METHODS		Verbal question: *Do teachers in this school use a variety of teaching styles?*	Question 2-e Question 10-g, h

Appendix A

Questions To Be Answered	Representative Group Of Students	Representative Group Of Teachers	Principal and Other Site Administrators	Representative Group Of Parents	Central Office Staff	All Faculty: Selected Data Faculty Inventory Questionnaire
TEACHERS AND TEACHING						
4. How is teaching effectiveness monitored?		Verbal question: *Please describe the teacher evaluation system used in this school. Are teachers, administrators & others generally satisfied that it is appropriate, comprehensive & fair?*	Verbal question: *Please describe the teacher evaluation system used in this school. Are teachers, administrators & others generally satisfied that it is appropriate, comprehensive & fair?*		Verbal question: *Please describe the teacher evaluation system used in this school. Are teachers, administrators & others generally satisfied that it is appropriate, comprehensive & fair?*	
5. How do faculty members maintain and extend their skills and knowledge?		Complete form: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Complete form: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT		Complete form: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Question 6-a, h, j, k Question 10-h, i
6. In this school is teaching seen as a professionally fulfilling career?		Verbal question: *Do teachers find their work satisfying? Do the majority see teaching as a career commitment?*	Verbal question: *Do teachers find their work satisfying? Do the majority see teaching as a career commitment?*		Verbal question: *Do teachers find their work satisfying? Do the majority see teaching as a career commitment?*	Question 1-a, f, g Question 6-i Questions 8&9 on front of questionnaire

Questions To Be Answered	Representative Group Of Students	Representative Group Of Teachers	Principal and Other Site Administrators	Representative Group Of Parents	Central Office Staff	All Faculty: Selected Data Faculty Inventory Questionnaire
STUDENTS AND LEARNING						
7. How are students organized for instruction?		Complete form: GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION	Complete form: GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION		Complete form: GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION	Question 4-c
8. How do students feel about their school?	Elementary students: verbal question: *Give me some words that describe this school for you.* For Secondary students ask above question & complete form: STUDENT VIEWS OF THEIR SCHOOL					Question 3-a, b, c, e, f

II 3

Questions To Be Answered	Representative Group Of Students	Representative Group Of Teachers	Principal and Other Site Administrators	Representative Group Of Parents	Central Office Staff	All Faculty: Selected Data Faculty Inventory Questionnaire
SCHOOL FACULTY						
9. Which of the characteristics of "effective schools" are in evidence in this school?	Elementary students: Complete form: SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS/ ELEMENTARY Secondary students: Complete form: SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY/ GENERAL	School Characteristics Survey/Professional form is used in Faculty Inventory. (Activity 3: Conditions of "Learning & Teaching") Use data in reporting teacher response in this question.	Complete form: SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY/ PROFESSIONAL. Score & discuss	Complete form: SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY/ GENERAL Score & discuss	Complete form: SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY/ PROFESSIONAL. Score & discuss	Question 1-b, c Question 3-d Question 4-a, b, d Question 5-a, c, d, e Question 6-a
10. How would the school climate be characterized?						Question 1-e, Question 2-c, Question 4-e, f, Question 5-e Question 7-a, b, c, d, e, f Question 8-e, Question 9-d,h, 15-d
11. How does the faculty view its ability to shape the nature of the school?		Verbal question: Do faculty members feel they can have an impact on this school--its program, climate & goals?	Verbal question: Do faculty members feel they can have an impact on this school--its program, climate & goals?		Verbal question: Do faculty members feel they can have an impact on this school--its program, climate & goals?	Question 1-i, j, k Question 2-f Question 6-b Question 10-a, d
12. How does informal & formal communication occur? Are these channels effective?			Verbal question: Please describe the informal communication channels among faculty. What is the formal communication system? Do you see ways that the informal or formal systems can be improved?	Verbal question: Do you receive the information about your child in this school that you need?	Verbal question: What is the formal communication system and do you see ways that it can be improved?	Question 5-b Question 6-c, d, f Question 9-c, f Question 15-a, e, f, g, h, i, j, k

Questions To Be Answered	Representative Group Of Students	Representative Group Of Teachers	Principal and Other Site Administrators	Representative Group Of Parents	Central Office Staff	All Faculty: Selected Data Faculty Inventory Questionnaire
SCHOOL FACILITY						
13. How are parents involved in the school?			Verbal question: Are parents involved fully & appropriately in this school? What are some examples of parent involvement in: curriculum dev., school spirit, extra-curricular activities, tutoring, better use of community resources, fund-raising, community recognition of qualifications?	Verbal question: Are parents involved fully & appropriately in this school? What are some examples of parent involvement in: curriculum dev., school spirit, extra-curricular activities, tutoring, better use of community resources, fund-raising, community recognition of qualifications?	Verbal question: Are parents involved fully & appropriately in this school? What are some examples of parent involvement in: curriculum dev., school spirit, extra-curricular activities, tutoring, better use of community resources, fund-raising, community recognition of qualifications?	Question 9-a, b, e, g, i
14. For the previous school year, what was the average daily attendance for students? For teachers? What are the dropout rates? What indicators of student academic achievement are kept? What uses are made of student achievement data?			When available, written reports on these topics shared, with interviewer		When available, written reports on these topics shared, with interviewer	Question 13-c, d, e

Questions To Be Answered	Representative Group Of Students	Representative Group Of Teachers	Principal and Other Site Administrators	Representative Group Of Parents	Central Office Staff	All Faculty: Selected Data Faculty Inventory Questionnaire
CURRICULUM						
15. What are the major emphases in the curriculum? Is the balance seen as appropriate?	Complete form: SUBJECTS EMPHASIZED IN THE CURRICULUM-- Use elementary or secondary form as appropriate, score, discuss	Complete form: SUBJECTS EMPHASIZED IN THE CURRICULUM-- Use elementary or secondary form as appropriate, score, discuss	Complete form: SUBJECTS EMPHASIZED IN THE CURRICULUM-- Use elementary or secondary form as appropriate, score, discuss	Complete form: SUBJECTS EMPHASIZED IN THE CURRICULUM-- Use elementary or secondary form as appropriate, score discuss	Complete form: SUBJECTS EMPHASIZED IN THE CURRICULUM-- Use elementary or secondary form as appropriate, score, discuss	Question 12-a, b, c Question 13-b
16. How is curriculum developed, updated? How is continuity and sequence established? How is the curriculum communicated to those who need to know about it?		Verbal question: *Please describe the Curriculum development process used in this district. Is there school-based curriculum development work? How do teachers know about what curriculum topics have been treated in earlier years? Are teachers aware of curriculum requirements? How--through guides, workshops, faculty meetings?*	Verbal question: *Please describe the Curriculum development process used in this district. Is there school-based curriculum development work? How do teachers know about what curriculum topics have been treated in earlier years? Are teachers aware of curriculum requirements? How--through guides, workshops, faculty meetings?*		Verbal question: *Please describe the Curriculum development process used in this district. Is there school-based curriculum development work? How do teachers know about what curriculum topics have been treated in earlier years? Are teachers aware of curriculum requirements? How--through guides, workshops, faculty meetings?*	Question 10-c Question 12-d, e, f, g Question 14-a, b, c

Questions To Be Answered	Representative Group Of Students	Representative Group Of Teachers	Principal and Other Site Administrators	Representative Group Of Parents	Central Office Staff	All Faculty: Selected Data Faculty Inventory Questionnaire
17. Are instructional materials synchronized with the curriculum? Do they support the curriculum?		Verbal question: *Is there a good match between instructional materials & the curriculum?*	Verbal question: *Is there a good match between instructional materials & the curriculum?*		Verbal question: *Is there a good match between instructional materials & the curriculum?*	Question 11-a, b, c, d Question 13-a Question 14-e
18. Which persons or group has the greatest influence on curriculum decisions? Are there some with greater involvement & influence than others?			Complete form: CURRICULUM INFLUENCERS	Complete form: CURRICULUM INFLUENCERS	Complete form: CURRICULUM INFLUENCERS	Question 14-d

APPENDIX B

THE FACULTY INVENTORY OVERVIEW

The process helps faculty members identify their similarities and differences, their priorities and aspirations. This Inventory builds collegiality and initiates Project goal-setting. The Faculty Inventory occurs during three sessions.

- In the first two hours, four activities are conducted with the entire faculty. These activities are preceded by a brief overview of the purpose of the Inventory and its relationship to the Project. Materials for these four activities follow:

  Activity One: DIADS/TRIADS--This activity, conducted three times during a forty-five minute period, uses a different color form for each level of the exercise. The activity is first completed with a team of two people; the team is then expanded to include eight to ten for the second trial; the team is then expanded to include one-half of the total faculty for the third completion. At the conclusion of the DIADS/TRIADS exercise, the two groups publicly share the outcomes.

  Activity Two: DEFINING CONDITIONS OF MASTERY--This activity presses faculty members to become more specific about their ideal school of tomorrow. Working in teams, respondents determine the desirability for their school of the six listed conditions necessary for mastery. When participants have finished the checklist, they are to complete side two.

  Activity Three: CONDITIONS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING--This activity is based on the effective schools research literation. Each faculty member checks those items that describe their school MOST OF THE TIME. Checks are totalled and recorded as the numerator for the fraction in the lower corner of the exercise. A discussion follows emphasizing those items recorded most frequently and those omitted most frequently.

  Activity Four: IMAGINING SUCCESS--This activity is designed to help faculty members focus on their idealized school.

- In the second part of the Faculty Inventory, individual faculty members complete a questionnaire, a copy of which can be obtained from the Mastery In Learning Project office.

- In the final session, all faculty members reconvene in an informal arrangement in one room to hear a report of all the data generated during the two preceding sessions and to discuss implications for the Project.

APPENDIX C

GUIDE FOR PROJECT DOCUMENTERS

The purpose of this short manual is to provide information and a set of skills which can be used by documenters in each of the Mastery in Learning Project schools. After an initial reading, it is suggested that Project documenters view the video tape, "Documenting the MIL Project" for an exploration and expansion of the ideas presented here.

What is the Purpose of Documentation?

As all of you are aware, documentation of the Project is an important task. Its importance and complexity are reflected by the need for documentation to be useful to the unique goals and problems of each site, yet general enough to provide a comprehensive account of the Project as a whole for both participating and nonparticipating MILP schools. In addition, the documentation can be of critical importance as an aid in convincing policy makers at all levels about the efficacy of this approach to school improvement, and to generate valuable knowledge about the profession as it is practiced.

Before proceeding to describe the method to be used for documenting the Project, it is important to note that we already have some information about the work thus far. These include the *School Profile*, the *Faculty Inventory*, minutes of Steering Committee meetings and sub-committees, and MILP products which have been developed at each site. These are important baseline data, yet they do not provide the rich and full "what it's really like here" data so crucial to understanding the MILP's impact in 27 very distinct settings.

What Methods Will We Use to Document?

We will selectively borrow the tools of ethnography, specifically the ethnographic interview, to document the Project further. The most important element of ethnography and one of its major differences from other modes of investigation, is the assumption that the best and most comprehensive way we can know and understand people is from their perspective. This represents a substantial departure from many other methods of inquiry whereby investigators predetermine what they expect to find. When this occurs, many phenomena go unnoticed and many questions go unasked since the investigator's eye is narrowly focused on a small piece of reality: this basal reader or that, this method of instruction, one or another theories of development.

In contrast, MILP documenters will attempt to portray a more holistic image of their individual schools over the life of the Project by focusing on four dimensions of school improvement, capturing the essence and consequences of the faculty's empowerment. What will emerge from each site are broad themes which documenters will uncover as they interview participants and learn their perspectives on MILP phenomena, themes which

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are invented and described by participants, not predetermined and verified by documenters. The four dimensions of school improvement are graphically portrayed in the matrix:

	Production and Use of Knowledge	The School: Teaching, Learning, Program
Feelings/ Perceptions	1	2
Outcomes/ Accomplishments	3	4

What are the Questions We Will Ask?

Following is a core list of questions. The first set of questions is designed to get faculty members to talk generally about their work, their relationship to their work, and their involvement in the MILP. The second set elicits perceptions and observations about the four key dimensions of the MILP. The third set asks faculty members to talk specifically about their hopes and plans for the future direction of the Project in their schools.

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What has your participation in the MILP meant to you both personally and professionally?

2. Has the MILP allowed you to connect things that passionately concern you to your work as a teacher and as an individual?

FOCUSED INQUIRY REGARDING THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

1. Has your participation in the Project made you feel more comfortable using educational research to enhance your skill as a teacher? (matrix cell #1)

2. Do you see your work as an opportunity to contribute to a greater understanding of the teaching/learning process? (cell #2)

3. Do you feel you have adequate opportunity to participate in school-wide decisions about teaching, learning, and curriculum? Do you feel the faculty as a whole has adequate opportunity to participate in school-wide decisions? (cell #2)

4. In your view, has the use and development of educational research for the MILP produced any results so far? (cell # 3)

5. Have you noticed changes in the use of teaching styles; the way students approach learning; and/or other changes in the school environment (cell #4)

WHITHER THE MILP

1. If you could choose, what would you keep about the Project and what would you eliminate?

2. Do you see any barriers in the Project accomplishing what you want it to do?

These questions should be asked at each site at the initiation of this part of the Project's documentation. Thereafter, documenters should use the same questions or adaptations/modifications of them at three-month intervals, keeping the same four dimensions of school improvement outlined in the matrix as a framework for questioning. In the design of subsequent questions, documenters should seek to refine, enlarge, or confirm the themes they have begun to discover, a process of "fine-tuning."

What are Some Hints for Interviewing?

Some additional points for the documenters to consider include the following:

1) Make repeated explanations. A simple statement may suffice: "As I said earlier, I'm more interested in finding out how you see things..."

2) Restate what the interviewee says. This reinforces and clarifies what has been said, and demonstrates a genuine interest in learning the perspective of the interviewee.

3) Bracketing prior beliefs and commitments. In much educational research, investigators begin their research with preconceived ideas of what they will find. Using an ethnographic framework, MILP documenters should make every effort to put aside their own beliefs about what the Project can and should accomplish in order to understand the perspectives of participants.

4) Leading responses. Phrases such as "Tell me more, can you give me more information, or what would have made you feel differently?" elicit more information. One has to use such prompters carefully, however, since they may stop or alter a response.

A form for documenters to use during the interviews is provided (see attached). Basic logistical details are found at the top of the first page: name, date, site, and interview number. These are important details for documenters to see changes in responses of individual participants over the life of the Project. The questions are printed on the forms with additional space for the interviewer to rephrase the question if that is desirable. Responses of the participants, as close to verbatim as possible, should be entered in the appropriate section on the form.

"Bracketed" thoughts--asides, musings, and afterthoughts of documenters which might be pursued at another time but which are not a part of participants' responses--can be entered in another section on the form. These asides might be written at the time of response, or when documenters go over the data after the interview has occurred.

Because the documenter is usually the only witness to a rich and complex narrative unfolding during each interview, the importance of recording these thoughts, questions, intuitions cannot be overstated. Here is where the documenter will begin the process of identifying themes, drawing directly on the responses of the interviewee.

Who Should be Interviewed and How Often?

There should be a regular interview schedule of three times a year, i.e., every three months. It is difficult to estimate the amount of time each will take -- probably from 15 minutes to 45 minutes per interview.

It is suggested that the documenter, in consultation with the steering committee leadership and the site based consultant, select a minimum of three people from the faculty to interview and to re-interview over the life of the Project. These people and others that you select should be as representative of the total faculty as possible.

We also urge you to select two people who will be interviewed one time only -- a different set of people during each interviewing schedule.

In addition to the five individual interviews that would occur during each schedule, you should form a group of 3 to 5 persons to respond to the same set of questions in a small group setting. It would be helpful if at least some of the members of this group remained constant from schedule to schedule. We also recommend that you have a backup person to take notes and to otherwise help you with this interview. The site-based consultant or a member of the steering committee could serve in this capacity.

How Will the Results of the Interviews be Analyzed and Used?:

Some suggestions for the documenter as he/she begins to analyze the data resulting from interviewing include:

1) As soon after an interview as possible, read your notes. This will help to clarify what the interviewee said, and is a time when the documenter can make notes regarding themes or connections to other interviews.

2) Think in terms of themes which emerge from the four dimensions of school improvement, but do not limit the themes to these dimensions exclusively. That is, if you see a recurring trend in the data which doesn't fit neatly into one of the dimensions, don't force it. Rather, identify it as a theme outside of the predetermined dimensions.

3) It will be most useful to you if individual themes are identified on separate pages with the theme at the top, and a list of words, phrases, or sentences used by the interviewees. These words verify the existence of the theme and describe it with richness and authenticity.

4) The source of these themes is the bracketed area on the interview form. Here you will have tentatively identified themes after studying the interviews individually and collectively. The documenter will lift the words, phrases, or sentences which characterize individual themes directly from the interviewee response section on the form.

5) These "theme lists" will assist the documenter in the actual identification of the themes and will be woven into a written narrative and tied together into a comprehensive portrait of the life of the MILP in each setting. This written narrative will take place at the end of the Project, not after each series of interviews. Instead, after each series, documenters should devote their time to going over interview data, constructing tentative, evolving theme lists, and preparing short "discussion guides" for their meeting with the steering committee.

The first use of the data will be at the school. We suggest that the documenter identify those themes and understandings that emerge from the interviews and discuss them with the steering committee at the conclusion of each interview schedule. That conversation should be seen as a vehicle to understand the progress of the Project and to determine how the findings can be used to plan for the next three month period and beyond. (It should be noted that this session with the steering committee is actually an extension of the interview process, another way to enrich the data.)

In regard to looking at the themes and understandings that emerge from all of the schools in the network, a staff member from the central project office will conduct a telephone interview with the documenter at the conclusion of each interview schedule. That interview will use the same questions that are used in each school -- except that we will ask you to generalize your responses to the extent possible to represent the thinking of your faculty.

It is very important that other faculties learn from the important work you are doing and that policy makers be helped to move away from top-down approaches to school improvement. The findings will become the basis of a book that will be written about the Project and published in winter 1990. In that book we will use vignettes to make the case for school-based school reform. The source of this material will be the findings from the interviews as well as the data from each school's *Faculty Inventory* and *School Profile*.

Will there be Other Documenting Activities?

The activities described in this manual, even when coupled with the other data being collected, will provide a less-than-fullbodied picture of the important work going forward in the 27 schools. Project staff will be talking with funding agencies about the possibility of supplementing the resources now devoted to documentation so that other opportunities could be used. These include:

- outside observers/interviewers to provide other perspectives
- specialists being available to the 27 schools to help them more carefully analyze the data and search for pervasive themes which would extend the usefulness of the data
- training sessions (other than the video tape) for school-based documentors
- opportunities for school-based documentors to meet to share experiences thereby enriching the data base
- offering stipends to the school-based documenters so that they could spend additional time analyzing their data
- provide other methods of dissemination including conference presentations, films, articles, video.

Informant

Interview # Site

	Informant's Response	Documenter's "Bracketed" Ideas, Insights, Questions, Intuitions, etc.
1. What has participation in the MILP meant to you personally and professionally?		
2. Has the MILP allowed you to connect things that passionately concern you to your work as a teacher and as an individual?		

APPENDIX D

TEACHING RESOURCES and KNOWLEDGE BASE (TRaK)

To begin the complex task of school improvement, faculties must be provided sufficient knowledge and information, enabling them to make the best possible decisions. There is, however, more information than any one teacher can read, assimilate, or use. The problem is:

- How can this information be organized to enable teachers to use it in an effective and timely fashion?
- How can this research be efficiently collected, sorted, selected, disseminated, and, MOST importantly, be used by teachers to improve educational opportunities for students?
- How can teachers share their resources, experiences, and judgments to make maximum use of this information?

TRaK (Teaching Resources and Knowledge) Resource Bank is being developed by MILP to process the wealth of educational research information now available to the profession from colleges and universities and, most particularly, from MILP's partners in the federally-funded research and development laboratories and centers. These institutions provide several kinds of resources to Project schools, including state-of-the-art information on school improvement topics.

TRaK is designed to assist in the identification of resource and reference materials which faculties can use in exploring their improvement priorities. Materials tested and recommended by Project School faculties and project consultants are added to the resource bank and organized to provide the best educational resource options available to assist our schools in developing their action plans and attaining improvement objectives. The resource options available in TRaK enable faculties to explore a variety of resources and to consider the range of alternatives pertinent to each objective prior to their selecting the best option for experimentation and development.

TRaK currently contains descriptions of resources on several topics suggested by the Project's Planning Priorities Guide (indicating the commonplaces of schooling upon which the Project is focused) and/or the pilot school faculties.

The MILP is in the process of referencing TRaK materials in an electronic data base. TRaK will become a technological tool which will enable teachers in the Project schools to find, select, and apply quality information relevant to their improvement priorities in a timely and efficient manner.

Ultimately, TRaK will serve as an electronic information network containing the best in educational resources. MILP staff will be responsible primarily for locating, reviewing, and selecting materials for the data base, creating a rich, fulsome and wide-ranging source of useable information. A star network is envisioned using the already existing NEA network as the intermediary for allowing selective access to unique segments of the data base

stored at NEA headquarters. TRaK will also serve to link the schools via electronic mail.

When operant, the system will allow its user to:

- Search the data base and sort for resources relevant to their priorities;
- Specify the type of resources (article, book, inservice program, film, resource person, simulation, newsletter, organization, game), desired grade-levels, and other pertinent information;
- Choose from resources that emphasize theory, research, or application;
- Learn how resources are used in other schools;
- Communicate with others concerning those resources to further increase the useability of materials (this kind of communication has proved to be invaluable during the pilot phase);
- Supply user feedback critical in the selection and evaluation process;
- User computer memory to gather important evaluation data by tracking previously accessed topics and resources;
- Use a bulletin board to share ideas and information;
- Receive assistance when needed through an information hotline to NEA;
- Participate in teleconferencing for professional development and sharing.

To realize this vision, MILP is actively seeking technical and resource assistance through corporate and foundation partnerships.